

**Amendments to Claims**

**Claim 1 (Original).** A method for the inducible expression of a heterologous nucleic acid molecule comprising:

a) providing a host cell having a genome comprising:

- i) a *yhcS* regulator gene responsive to an aromatic carboxylic acid inducer;
- ii) a promoter region, responsive to expression of the *yhcS* regulator gene; and
- iii) at least one heterologous nucleic acid molecule;

wherein the at least one heterologous nucleic acid molecule is operably linked to the promoter region;

b) contacting the host cell of (a) with an aromatic carboxylic acid inducer wherein the at least one heterologous nucleic acid molecule is expressed.

**Claim 2 (Original).** A method according to Claim 1 wherein the at least one heterologous nucleic acid molecule encodes at least one protein.

**Claim 3 (Original).** A method according to Claim 2 wherein the at least one protein is part of an enzymatic biosynthetic pathway producing a product selected from the group consisting of isoprenoids, terpenoids, tetrapyrroles, polyketides, vitamins, amino acids, fatty acids, proteins, nucleic acids, carbohydrates, antimicrobial agents, and anticancer agents.

**Claim 4 (Original).** A method according to claim 1 wherein the at least one heterologous nucleic acid molecule encodes a reporter.

**Claim 5 (Original).** A method according to Claim 4 wherein the reporter is selected from the group consisting of luxCDABE, bgaB, cat, dsRed, galK, gfp, lacZ, luc, luxAB, nptII, phoA, uidA, and xylE.

**Claim 6 (Original).** A method according to Claim 1 wherein the aromatic carboxylic acid inducer is selected from the group consisting of para-hydroxybenzoic acid, para-hydroxycinnamic acid, cinnamic acid, salicylic acid, benzoic acid, and 1-napthoic acid.

**Claim 7 (Original).** A method according to Claim 1 wherein the promoter region, responsive to expression of the *yhcS* regulator gene is promoter region isolated from the *yhcRQR* operon.

**Claim 8 (Original).** A method according to Claim 1 wherein the host cell is an enteric bacteria.

**Claim 9 (Original).** A method according to Claim 1 wherein the host cell is selected from the group of genera consisting of *Escherichia*, *Salmonella*, *Bacillus*, *Acinetobacter*, *Streptomyces*, *Methylobacter*, *Rhodococcus*, *Corynebacterium*, *Pseudomonas*, *Rhodobacter*, and *Synechocystis*.

**Claim 10 (Original).** A method for the inducible expression of a heterologous nucleic acid molecule comprising:

- a) providing an enteric bacterial host cell having a genome comprising:
  - i) a *yhcS* regulator gene responsive to an aromatic carboxylic acid inducer;
  - ii) a promoter region, responsive to expression of the *yhcS* regulator gene; and
  - iii) at least one heterologous nucleic acid molecule;wherein the at least one heterologous nucleic acid molecule is operably linked to the promoter region;
- b) contacting the host cell of (a) with an aromatic carboxylic acid inducer wherein the at least one heterologous nucleic acid molecule is expressed.

**Claim 11 (Original).** A method according to Claim 10 wherein the *yhcS* regulator gene responsive to an aromatic carboxylic acid inducer is an isolated nucleic acid molecule selected from the group consisting of:

- a) an isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising nucleic acid sequence SEQ ID NO:1; and
- b) an isolated nucleic acid molecule, which hybridizes to SEQ ID NO:1 after being washed with 0.1×SSC, 0.1% SDS at 65°C and washed with 2×SSC, 0.1% SDS followed by a second wash in 0.2×SSC, 0.1% SDS.

**Claim 12 (Original).** A method according to Claim 10 wherein the promoter region, responsive to expression of the *yhcS* regulator gene is an isolated nucleic acid molecule selected from the group consisting of:

- a) an isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising nucleic acid sequence SEQ ID NO:3; and
- b) an isolated nucleic acid molecule, which hybridizes to SEQ ID NO:3 after being washed with 0.1×SSC, 0.1% SDS at 65°C and washed with 2×SSC, 0.1% SDS followed by a second wash in 0.2×SSC, 0.1% SDS.

**Claim 13 (Original).** A method according to Claim 10 wherein the enteric bacterial host cell is *E. coli*.

Claims 14-19 (Canceled)